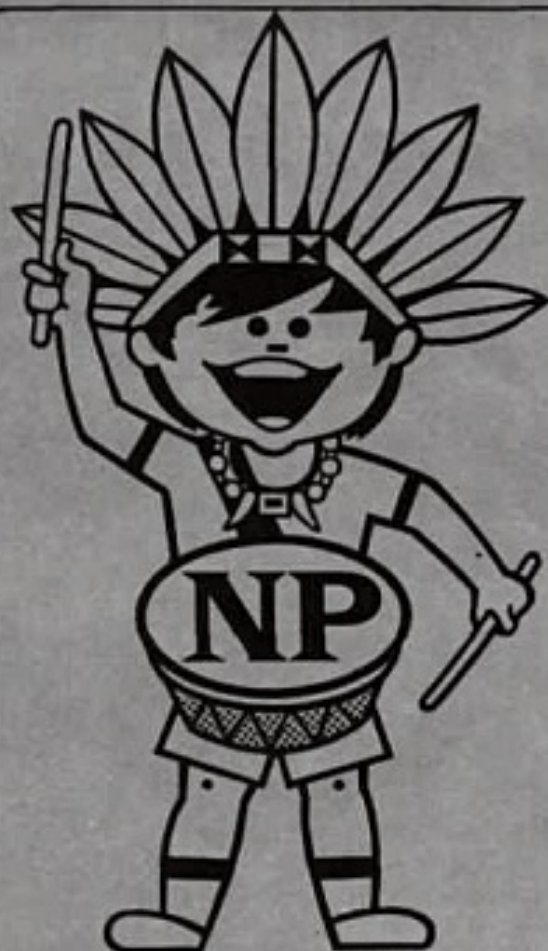


CHANDAMAMA

JANUARY 1976
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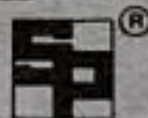
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THE PHANTOM AND THE BEAST

1st January 1976

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THE INCREDIBLE THIEF

15th January 1976

In spite of highest security, there are thefts at Inter-Intel—the world-wide information pool of crime and criminals. Mandrake is called to solve the mystery. But in that very half-hour, there is another theft! Who is the thief? Here's another spell-binding Mandrake thriller as the mystery deepens with each page.



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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 6

JANUARY 1976

No. 7

FORWARD TO NEW YEAR!

"Time changes" is a common expression. Does it really? Well, that is for philosophers to discuss. (And you are not barred from discussing it, for every human being is a bit of philosopher!)

Whether time changes or not, we do change. We change either for better or worse. In changing for the better there is always a lasting satisfaction. In changing for worse there might be a temporary pleasure but that soon peters out and what is left is an inevitable feeling of remorse. Hence it is wise to change, but change for the better.

You must have observed how the Chandamama tries to change. To keep you abreast of time, we introduced, during 1975, two columns: *News For You, And Some Views Too*. The items might be few, but they reflect our time, and that is important.

Because 1975 was declared as the International Women's Year, we carried a series of features on some of the world's great women.

But it is not enough to be topical or just to "move with time". Much of what we do or think today has its root in the past. It pays to peep into the mines of experiences and imaginations of the bygone generations. The tales of King Vikramaditya and the Vampire are such a mine. We will give you a selection of them during this year.

Yet another gift will be the stories behind the proverbs and the phrases. You will find them in the pages where you used to read the history of fruits. They will give you the background and the significance of a proverb or a phrase so that you can make its most proper use. Besides, they are exciting stories. Just learn while you enjoy!

IN THIS ISSUE

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- * THE CURSE OF DISCORD—A Pictorial Story ... 24
- * THE HEEL OF ACHILLES—A Proverb Story ... 30
- * MENDICANT WHO SAVED A VILLAGE—Legends of India ... 32

PLUS 8 COMPLETE STORIES
BESIDES OTHER REGULAR FEATURES

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. P. V. Subramanyam



Mr. P. V. Subramanyam

- * These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- * Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 31st JANUARY
- * Winning captions will be announced in MARCH issue
- * Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to : PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST, CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE, MADRAS - 600 026

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in November Issue

The prize is awarded to : Miss Banumathy
23, Ram Mohanpura, Srirampura
Bangalore-560 021.

Winning Entry - 'Starting Right' - 'Sparkling Bright'

NEWS FOR YOU...

Record in Poetry Writing!

According to a report in the *New York Post*, a 44 year old Indian yogi, Chinmoy, who had previously set record in poetry-writing by composing 360 poems in a day, has now surpassed himself with a colossal stride by composing 843 poems during a 24 hour session from a Saturday midnight to the Sunday midnight, through "powers of concentration developed by meditation". Chinmoy who lived in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry from his boyhood, had left for U.S.A. in 1964 and has since become a guru and conducts the UN Meditation Group. He is also a painter and has done over 1,00,000 paintings in about a decade!

And some other Records!

New Times of Moscow informs us about David Brannock who recently claimed a world record in building a house of cards. In four hours flat he built a fourteen-storey house using seventeen decks of cards for the purpose.

A report from Spain says that Xavier Larrea, 24, swallowed 65 eggs non-stop setting a world-record in egg-eating. The previous record was held by an Englishman.

India had her Giraffe too!

The existence of giraffe around the Susunia hill region of Bankura district in West Bengal about 20,000 years ago has been conclusively proved after identification of a fossilised skeleton by the Zoological Survey of India.

....AND SOME VIEWS TOO

A Guide to 20th Century Thoughts on Success

Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value. —*Albert Einstein*

Success is the brand on the brow of the man who has aimed too low. —*John Masefield*

What an individual thinks or feels as success (as an acceptable goal) is unique with him. In our experience we have found that each individual has a different means of, and attitude toward, what constitutes success. Therefore, a human being cannot be typified or classified.

—*Alfred Adler*

Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably taken into account.

—*George Orwell*

We Regret the Error

The saying, "The man who makes no error does not usually make anything," is no consolation for us for our allowing an error to be there in the article on Mrs. Indira Gandhi in our last issue, in regard to the date of the death of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Our real consolation is, the date in question, 27 May 1964, is too well known for anybody to have been misinformed by the error.

How the Ducks Escaped Death

In the remote interior of a vast forest was a quiet little lake. A paddling of ducks lived under the shrubs on the bank of the lake. In fact, they had lived there for generations, undisturbed by anybody. Once in a while a hunter entered that part of the forest. But such was the colour of the ducks that when they lay low under the shrubs, it was not easy to notice them.

One morning one old duck called the attention of all the other ducks to a small plant that was growing near their residence. "I know this plant," said the old duck, "and I am afraid, this might one day bring about our destruction!"

Surprised, the ducks asked him, "Why do you say so? How can a tree harm us?"

"This plant, if allowed to grow up, will bear a kind of excellent fruits. This forest is frequented not only by hunters but also by fruit-gatherers. If a fruit-gatherer is attracted towards this tree, he will naturally find out our nests.

He may then feel tempted to bag us!"

At this all the ducks quacked out, "Such fear is without any foundation. The plant might not be a fruit-bearing one at all. Even if it were, it might die untimely. Even if it grew up, it may fail to grow fruits because of the climate here. Even if it grew fruits, it may not attract anybody's attention. Even if it did, people may not care to walk into this damp area, negotiating through thorny shrubs. Even if someone came, he may not be able to find us. Even if he found us, he may not be interested in us. Even if he tried to catch us, we might still give him the slip!"

But the old duck said, "What use entertaining so many 'evens' and 'ifs'? If you lend your beaks, we may uproot the plant in no time. That will relieve us from all fear of the future."

"But we have no fear at all! If you have, why not use your blessed beak and do the needful?" retorted some of the young ducks.

The old duck kept quiet.

Years passed. The plant became a big tree and bore fruits. Because the ducks saw it everyday, they did not observe the slow change that had come over it.

When the fruits were ripe, a forest-dweller saw them and came there to gather them. While gathering the fruits he saw the signs of a large paddling of ducks living there although no duck was there at that moment.

The forest-dweller spread a wide net over the place and went away.

By sundown the ducks returned there. As soon as they descended on the ground they were caught in the net. They struggled hard to free themselves, but in vain.

By then the young ducks of

the other day had grown old and the old one who had warned them about the plant had grown the oldest duck in the whole paddling and was called Grandpa.

"What should we do now, Grandpa?" asked the ducks in sad voice.

"Only if you would have heard me then!" sighed—Grandpa and said, "However, do as I say. Pretend to be dead—all of you. Remember, whether you will live or not depends on whether you can act as dead or not!"

The old duck then gave them certain more advices. When it was dusky, the forest-dweller arrived there. He was delighted to see so many ducks caught in his net. But coming close, he found them appearing dead. He picked up one of them and



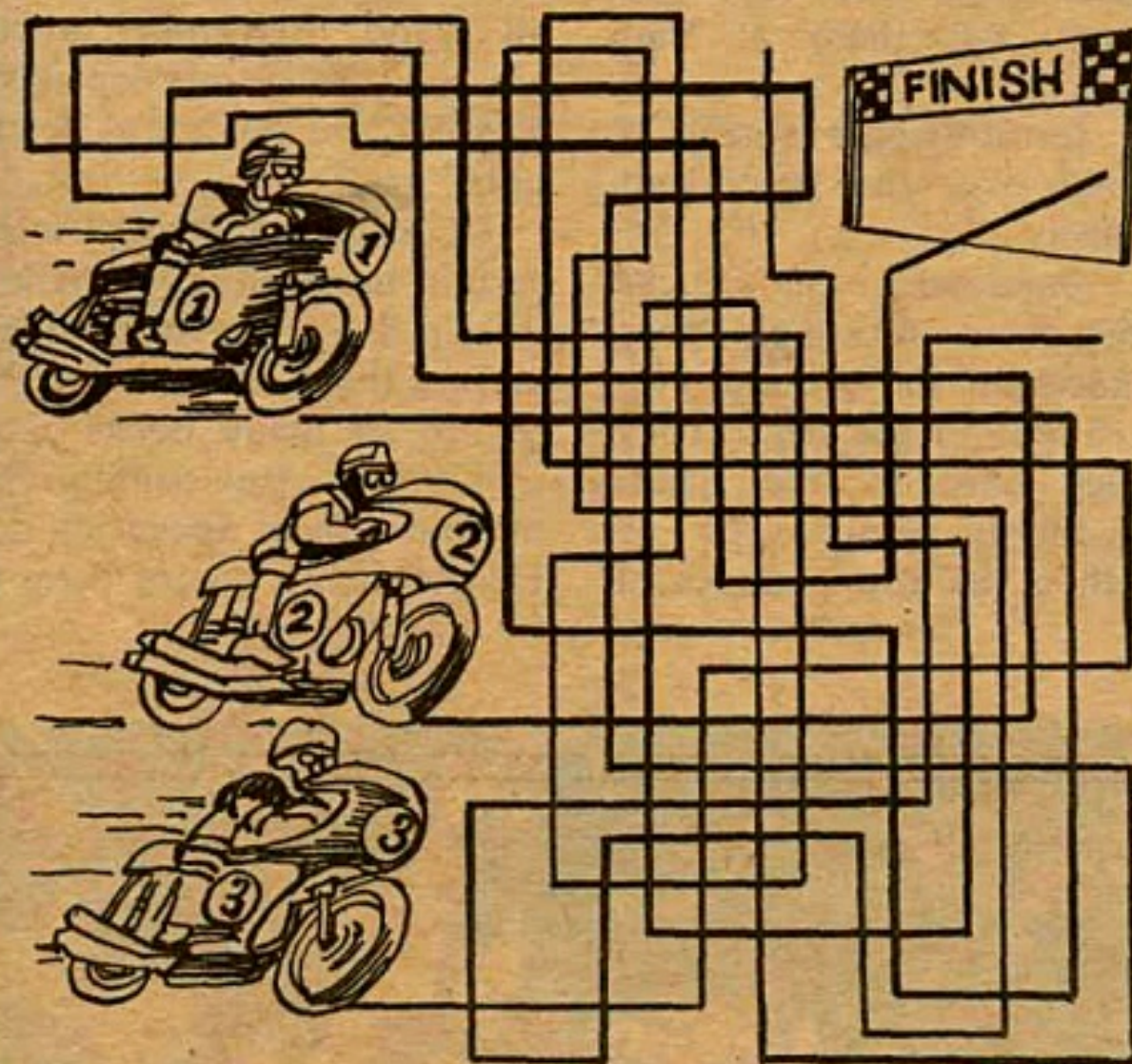
threw it aside. It lay as though lifeless. One by one he did the same to all the ducks. They all lay like dead. When Grandpa saw that there was no more duck in the net, he gave out a smart quack.

At once all the ducks flapped their wings and rose high into the sky.


After an hour's search they found out another lake and settled on a spot chosen by the Grandpa duck.

PUZZLE TIME

First guess which motor-cyclist wins the race then trace along the lines to see if you were correct.



ANSWER: 3

A vertical illustration on the left side of the page. It depicts a vampire with dark hair and a pale face, wearing a long red dress. He is holding a woman in a dark dress from behind. The woman's face is pale and she appears to be unconscious or dead. The background is dark and spooky, with gnarled tree branches, a bat flying in the upper left, and a skull on the ground. The overall tone is macabre and mysterious.

Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

THE DAMSEL OF THE SEA

In days gone by, a great king ruled over a prosperous kingdom from his capital at Ujjain. Famous in history and legends as Vikramaditya—mighty as the sun—he was a king with immense love for learning as well as for adventure.

King Vikram sat in his court for hours everyday, rewarding the virtuous, punishing the evil-doer and encouraging scholars, poets, musicians and artists. During such sessions numerous people came to meet him. They brought for him gifts of jewels, gold or other precious things.

Among such visitors was a mendicant who on every visit presented the king with a fruit. A mendicant was not expected to possess wealth. So the king accepted his humble gift with the same show of courtesy with which he would have accepted a diamond from a rich merchant. He used to hand over the fruit to the royal storekeeper.



One morning the mendicant gave him his usual gift just when he was going out to inspect his stables. The king accepted the fruit all right and went out while playing with it, tossing it up and then catching it when it came down.

It so happened that after a while the fruit fell down from his hand. Instantly a pet monkey who was nearby swooped down upon it and tried to crack it with his teeth.

The fruit broke and pop came out of it a handy ball of ruby. The king's surprise knew no bound. He picked up the ruby and sent for an expert. The expert examined it and said that it was the finest ruby he had

ever known.

"What did you do to all the fruits I have been giving you?" the anxious king asked of his store-keeper.

"My lord, I have continued to throw them into our store through the window!" replied the store-keeper.

The king ordered him to fetch them and when they were produced before him, he was further astonished and delighted to see that each one of the dry fruits contained a precious ruby.

When the mendicant came the next day, the king gave all attention to him and asked him, "Why have you bestowed so much kindness on me?"

"To be frank, I expect you to help me in a very important work of mine, O king, but of that I will tell you in private," replied the mendicant.

The king led him into the private audience chamber. The mendicant then said, "I know how brave you are. Hence I will ask you to do something which requires courage. But, for that, you must meet me under a banian tree at the middle of the cremation ground beyond the city, at night, on the 14th day of the dark half of the month."

Vikram hesitated for a while. But the spirit of adventure got the better of him. He agreed to meet the mendicant at the appointed hour.

It was a dark night with a terrible gale blowing. When Vikram approached the cremation ground, he was received by the howling foxes and jackals. As he proceeded through the ground, lightning showed him fearful faces of ghouls and ghosts staring at him or dancing around him.

But undaunted, Vikram reached the banian tree. The mendicant was delighted to see him.

"Now, what is the work you expect me to perform?" asked the king.

"At the northern-most corner of this ground stands a very old tree. You will see a corpse hanging from one of its branches. Go and fetch it for me. I am seeking certain occult powers which I will get only if a king brings this particular corpse to me and if I practise certain rites sitting on it," disclosed the mendicant.

To fetch a corpse that hung on a distant tree in that stormy night was not at all a pleasing task. But King Vikram braved



the weather and the darkness as well as the menacing yells and shrieks of ghosts and goblins and soon reached the old tree. Raising a burning torch he found the corpse hanging. He climbed the tree and by a stroke of his sword cut the rope with which the corpse was tied to the branch. The corpse fell to the ground, but gave out an eerie cry.

Vikram, not knowing that the corpse was possessed by a spirit, thought that the fellow was alive. He came down and lifted up the sprawling body. At that the corpse began to laugh.

Surprised, the king asked, "Why do you laugh?"

No sooner had the king

opened his mouth than the corpse slipped away from his hands and hung on to the tree of its own. Six times did King Vikram brought it down and six times the corpse gave him the slip. At last Vikram realised that the corpse did the mischief only when he talked.

On the seventh time Vikram put the corpse on his shoulder and began walking quietly. He had gone a few steps when the corpse, which in fact was a vampire, said, "O King, tiresome is the way. Let me tell you a tale to keep you amused!"

Thereafter the vampire went on:

Long ago the kingdom of Anga was ruled by Yasaketu. The young king was entirely given to fun and entertainments. Luckily, he had for his minister an extremely honest man. The king left the affairs of his state to the minister and remained engrossed in merrymaking.

The minister forgot all his leisure and comfort and did his best to govern the kingdom justly. But other officers, jealous of him, spread the scandal that he was corrupt and that he was leading the country into evil days.

The minister felt very sad

and asked his wife what he should do.

"Better leave the country for a few months. Then either the officers will realise your value or the king will come to sense and begin doing his duty. Whatever happens it will be good for you," said his wife.

The minister liked the idea. He went to the king and said, "My lord, I am going out on pilgrimage. Please do not neglect to discharge your duty during my absence!"

"No use going on pilgrimage!" shouted the king.

But the minister replied, "I must go, my lord. I must travel while I have strength. I can't walk or ride when I am quite old!"

The king who had again plunged into merrymaking, did not say anything.

The minister lost no time in leaving the kingdom. After a few days of journey, he reached a harbour where he met a merchant, an old friend of his. The merchant was about to launch a voyage to an island. He was too happy to take the minister with him.

They reached the island safe and after the merchant had sold his goods for a lot of gold,

they began their homeward voyage.

It was a moonlit night. The merchant and the minister were talking and strolling on the ship's deck. Suddenly the water whirled before them and a bejewelled tree rose from the high surges. On the tree was seated a damsel of indescribable beauty, playing on veena.

"How wonderful!" cried the minister.

"Wonderful, no doubt, but nothing unusual," commented the merchant, "We have seen this several times."

The tree and the damsel disappeared in a moment. But the minister kept on gazing in that direction for a long time.

King Yasaketu had been much worried over the sudden disappearance of his minister. When he was informed by his spies that the minister was approaching the capital, he rushed to welcome him and asked him, "Tell me, my friend, where had you been and what did you see?"

The minister narrated his experiences including what he had seen in the sea, in detail. The king was thrilled to hear of the strange sight and exclaimed, "My dear minister, take charge of the kingdom. I am off in



search of that lady of the sea!"

No persuasion, no argument, no imploring could stop the king. He left the palace forthwith.

He hired a ship and began wandering in the sea. After some time, in a moonlit night, he saw the strange sight of which the minister had told him. He looked on, spell-bound, at the damsel who emerged from the sea. But as soon as she disappeared under the water, he got back his voice and shouted, "Take me with you!" Next moment the king made a plunge into the sea.

Deep under the water he found a magnificent palace. He entered it and soon saw the



damsel resting on her ivory cot.

The doe-eyed damsel asked him, "Who are you and what brings you here?"

"I am Yasaketu, the king of Anga. I have risked my life to come here only to be able to gaze at you," answered Yasaketu and asked, "But will you please tell me who are you?"

"I am Mrigankavati, a nymph. I have been left here by my father. Once in a while I can rise above the water seated on a magic tree," answered the nymph.

The lonely nymph, it seems, liked the king's company. Days passed. The king requested the nymph to marry him. The nymph agreed, but

on condition that on four different days every month she would absent herself from the house and the king must not ask her where she went and why.

Thereafter both lived as husband and wife happily and a year passed. One day, while going out on her mysterious mission, the nymph said, "Conduct yourself carefully during my absence. Never descend into that well in that corner of the house. If you do, you will suddenly find yourself out of the sea, standing right in your own kingdom!"

When the nymph left the house, the king followed her secretly. She had not gone far when a demon appeared before her and swallowed her up. The king at once brought his sword down upon the demon's neck. The happy nymph emerged from the demon's corpse.

"I do not know whether I am dreaming or I am awake!" exclaimed the king.

"You are not dreaming. Let me unravel the mystery to you. I was attending upon my father faithfully. But on four auspicious days in a month I went to worship goddess Durga and neglected serving my father. That displeased my father. He

uttered a curse upon me as a result of which I was swallowed up by the demon on those four days. He vomitted me out at the end of the day. But my father had assured me that if some day the demon is killed, I will be free from the curse. Now that the demon is killed and I am free, I am again a full-fledged nymph, with all my supernatural powers back to me. A man and a nymph cannot live as husband and wife. I must go back to my father and you must return to your kingdom."

Deep was the king's sorrow at these words of the nymph. He implored her to stay for a week more with him. When the week was over he stood near the well in order to jump into it so that he could emerge in his kingdom. The nymph stood near him, weeping at their impending separation. Suddenly the king took hold of her and jumped into the well along with her.

The very next moment both were found standing close to Yasaketu's palace. And once on the earth, the damsel ceased to be a nymph and became a normal human being.

The news of the king's arrival



spread and officers and people rushed to meet him. The minister too came running. But as soon as he saw the damsel, he collapsed and died as though thunder-struck.

The vampire finished the story and asked King Vikram, "Tell me, O King, why did the minister die so suddenly? Was it because he was to lose his authority now that the king was back? Or was it because he had a secret desire to marry the nymph and he was disappointed to see that the king had married her? If you know the right answer and yet choose to keep mum, your head will be shattered to pieces!"

Answered King Vikram,

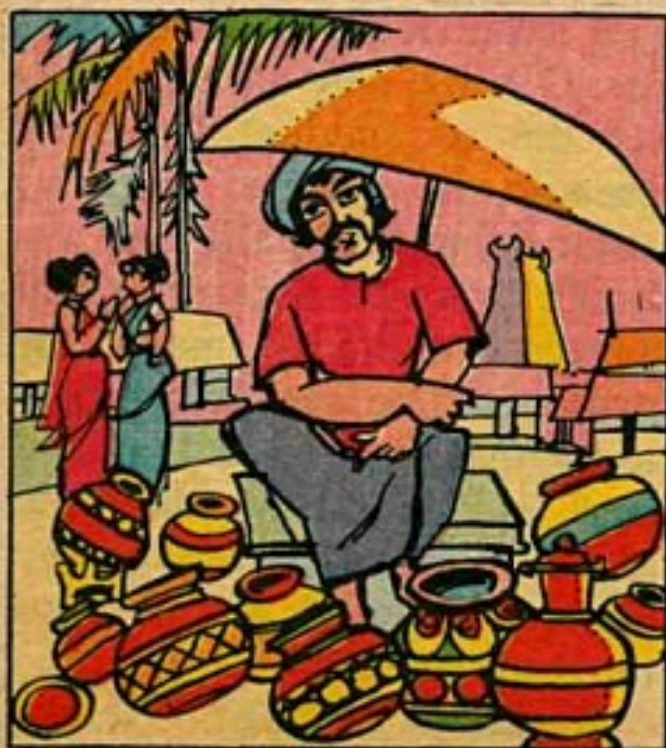


“None of these was the cause of the minister’s death. As it is, the king neglected his duty and the poor minister had to bear the burden of administration and also had to bear with the false scandals spread by others. Now when he saw the king returning with the beautiful nymph, he at once knew that

the king would never find any time to rule the kingdom. He realised that his own agony will never come to an end. It was this thought that killed him.”

As soon as King Vikram spoke, the vampire slipped off his shoulder and hung onto the tree.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





EASY ADVICES

Ramdeen lived in a small thatched hut which had been inhabited by his forefathers for several generations. Adjacent to the hut he had a field which he had put to banana cultivation. That yielded him a comfortable income.

One morning while Ramdeen was watering his plants, a horse-drawn carriage entered his field. As Ramdeen looked on, who should emerge from the carriage but the Zamindar's wife! Surprised, Ramdeen hurried up to her and greeted her.

The Zamindar's wife said, "Ramdeen! I have a small request to make to you. Will you sell your thatched hut to me?"

Ramdeen stood silent and

intrigued because he could not immediately understand the import of the proposal. What will the landlord's wife do with his dilapidated hut? He wondered.

"I don't want your banana field; only your old hut. And I will pay a thousand rupees for it," said the lady.

Ramdeen could not believe his own ears. The hut and the piece of land on which it stood could hardly be worth two hundred rupees. Why is the lady willing to give a thousand?

"If the price seems to you inadequate, well, I will give you twelve hundred rupees. Now, what do you say?" asked the lady again.

Ramdeen still stood speech-



less with amazement. With twelve hundred rupees he could launch some new trade. Or should he construct a new house?

As no answer came from him, the lady said again, "All right, I will give fifteen hundred rupees. Make up your mind. I have spoken for the last time."

Ramdeen bowed to her and said, "Very well. I will vacate my hut before the evening. You can send somebody to take possession of it."

"Good." I will send the money through our clerk who would meet you in the evening," said the lady. She then thanked

Ramdeen and went away.

Ramdeen ran into his hut and told his wife, "We are lucky. Now we can build a nice house on a corner of the banana field."

Soon a number of his neighbours who with great curiosity had heard from distance what transpired between him and the Zamindar's wife, came pressing to him. "Are you really selling away your hut?" asked one.

"Why not if I get fifteen hundred rupees?" Ramdeen said.

"You are a fool. Why should anybody care to pay fifteen hundred rupees for this worthless hut of yours? There must be some mystery behind it," one of them said.

"The matter is quite clear. The Zamindar's wife must have somehow come to know that a treasure lies buried under the floor of Ramdeen's hut. That explains her anxiety to buy it up," said another.

"It must be so," observed yet another, "Ramdeen! Don't commit the blunder of doing away with the house. Better explore the hut and find the treasure for yourself."

Ramdeen saw light in these advices. His wife also said,

"What our wise neighbours say sound quite sensible. The Zamindar's daughter's marriage is to take place after a month. How can they afford to spend so much money on our hut now? This cannot be an item of dowry for their daughter!"

In the evening the Zamindar's clerk arrived with fifteen hundred rupees. But he had to return disappointed, for, Ramdeen declined to part with his hut.

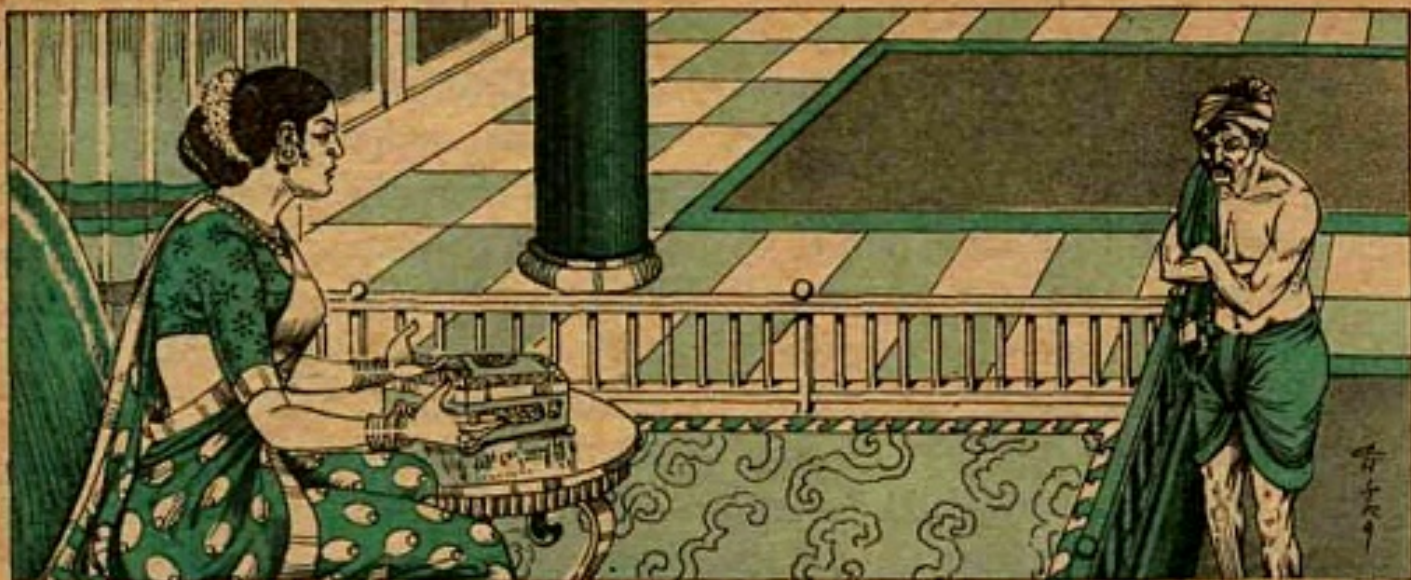
As soon as it was dark Ramdeen began exploring his floor with a spade. Nothing was found. He started pulling down his thatch. That too did not

yield anything. By and by he demolished the walls. Then he sat down exhausted and cried out, "I'm really a fool!"

"Don't worry. Meet the Zamindar's wife in the morning and tell her that you have changed your mind. Accept whatever money she gives."

No sooner had the sun arisen than Ramdeen was seen loitering around the Zamindar's house. When he could meet the Zamindar's wife, he said, "I am sorry for sending away your clerk yesterday. However, now you can take my property. Give me whatever price you deem fit."





"Ramdeen! Your property is of no importance to me any longer. Do you know why I was eager to buy it? I pleaded with my husband to dispose of our old carriage and to have a new one. But he said that nobody would do away with one's ancestral property. In course of argument he off hand cited your example, saying that you will never sell your ancestral hut even if you were offered two thousand rupees. I said that I can buy it from you. My husband said that if I could do so by evening, he would accept

defeat and buy a new carriage for me. But you retracted your promise in the evening. I have already conceded defeat. Now it is too late for me to be interested in the deal!" . . .

Ramdeen stood without a word, lowering his head with shame.

"Do you know a funny thing?" said the lady again, "Each one of those who advised you not to sell your hut met me one by one and offered to sell me their huts at cheaper rates!"



"I just walk him around the room. It's much easier than sweeping the floor!"

THE CURSE OF DISCORD



This is an episode dating back to the time of Lord Buddha. On the river Ganga was then situated a prosperous land, Vaishali, which was a democracy. People elected an assembly and the assembly elected two chiefs who ruled the land for a period.

The neighbouring kingdom, Magadh, was then ruled by King Ajatashatru. He had tried several times to conquer Vaishali, but had failed because the people of Vaishali always rose as one man against the invaders. Ajatashatru viewed Vaishali from distance and sighed.

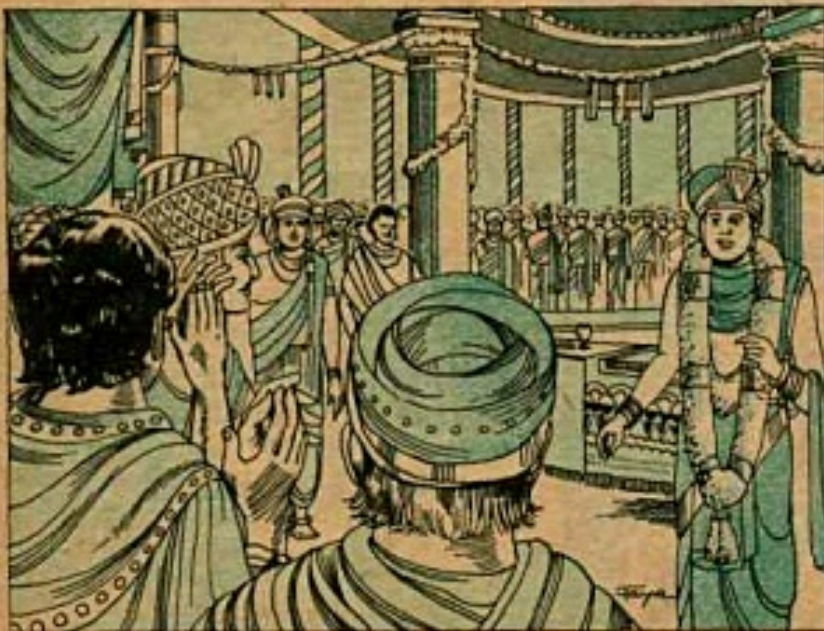
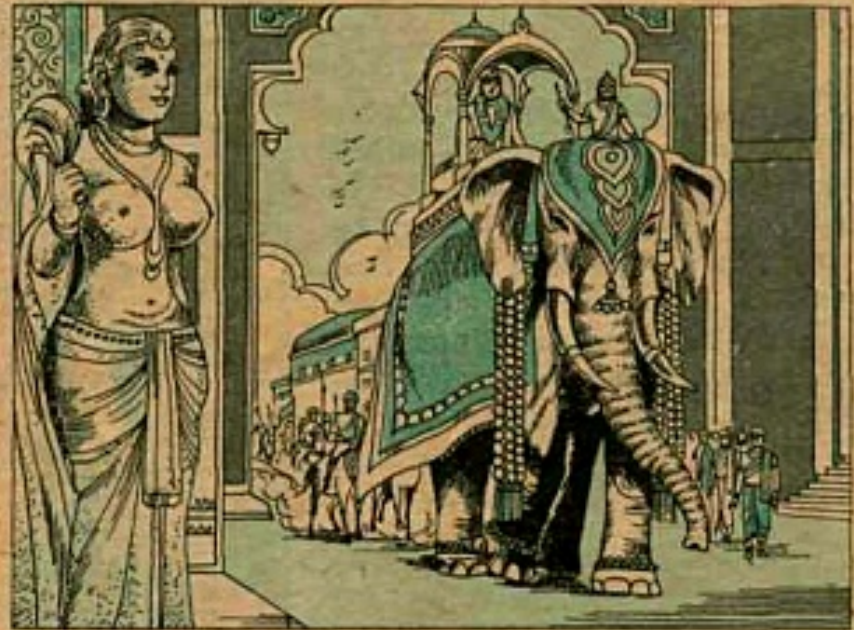


Vasyakara, the chief minister of Ajatashatru, knew well about the king's agony. He made a wicked plan to satisfy his king. Following the plan, the king pretended to get annoyed with him and publicly drove him out of the kingdom.



Vasyakara, pretending to be weeping, crossed the Ganga. News had reached Vaishali that he had been driven out of Magadh because of his opposition to his king's design on Vaishali.

He was, naturally, given a warm reception when he landed in Vaishali. He was taken on an elephant to the Assembly, cheered by the people.



In recognition of his goodwill which had cost him his chief-ministership of Magadh, the Assembly of Vaishali voted unanimously to give him the position of the Adviser to their Government. Thus, Vasyakara became a very important person in the society of Vaishali.

Vasyakara had carried a lot of gold with him. He began to lavishly entertain the influential people of Vaishali. In a period of two years he became very much popular with all sections of the people of the democratic Vaishali.



Vasyakara found out that between the two elected chiefs of Vaishali one had a great hold over the army while the other was popular among the public. He now schemed to sow the seed of discord between the two.

After Vasyakara impressed both the chiefs that he was their greatest friend, he began instigating each against the other. Soon dissension between the two leaders spread into a conflict between the army and the public.





After the public and the army fell apart, Vasyakara succeeded in dividing the army itself into rival camps. He played the same trick on the public too. Groups often quarrelled and clashed.

Within a short time Vaishali was reduced to a land of chaos. Vasyakara knew that the time was now ripe for giving the signal to Ajatashatru.

At a message from him the army of Magadh rushed on Vaishali.



The guards of Vaishali tolled the bell to summon their soldiers and to warn their people. But all were indisciplined and arrogant and a few came forward to defend their freedom. Ajatashatru, victorious, carried the people of Vaishali as slaves to Magadh. Thus fell a democracy of the ancient India.



A MATTER OF DESTINY

Gopalacharya was a well-known scholar. He taught his pupils in front of his house, under a big banian tree.

One afternoon, in course of lecturing to his pupils, he said, "If you have a small tumbler with you, it is the same whether you go to a small well or to a big lake. The lake might have a huge quantity of water, but all you can bring is a tumblerful of it. The same principle holds good in regard to your destiny. Whether you go to a mountain of gold or to a deserted cremation ground, you will get what is ordained by your destiny.

We do not know how far Gopalacharya himself believed in this theory, but a young man

of the village named Shivaram who happened to hear the statement while passing by was greatly impressed by it.

Shivaram was the son of the village priest. Although he was already in his twenties, he was considered by all as a good-for-nothing lad. However, he did not do any harm to anybody and so people tolerated him, not without some affection.

When Shivaram heard Gopalacharya, he thought, "I don't know where the mountain of gold is situated. But I know where the cremation ground is. Let me proceed there and find out what is there in my destiny."

He waited till the evening and after his dinner proceeded towards the cremation ground.



It was a moonlit night. Here and there a few corpses were being burnt. Jackals howled from time to time. Vultures and crows flapped their wings on the tree-tops. Shivaram lay under a tree and closed his eyes.

Sleep overtook him in no time. At midnight he felt as though someone was pulling him by his cloth. Sleep, however, was so much precious to Shivaram that he did not care to open his eyes.

He woke up feeling warm when the sunlight fell on him. Then, to his great joy, he found two pieces of gold lying near

his hand.

"So, this much was ordained by my destiny. Not bad!" he told himself.

He returned home and gave the gold to his father, who was as much pleased with the son as surprised.

A year passed. They had built a good house with the money they had received by selling the gold. One day the priest told his son, "Shivaram! Only if I could get some money, I will like to arrange for your marriage."

"We will get it if it is in our destiny," said Shivaram and at night he proceeded to the cremation ground and slept under the tree.

This time, at midnight, he felt as though he was being dragged away by some beings towards a fire. But he did not open his eyes. Soon he forgot all about that feeling as he was totally immersed in a deep sleep. When he opened his eyes in the morning, he found two pieces of gold lying beside him.

He gave the gold to his father. The happy priest began arranging for Shivaram's marriage.

Shivaram was not accustomed to hide anything from anybody.

His strange experiences and gains in the cremation ground soon became everybody's knowledge. Gopalacharya too heard the story.

One day Gopalacharya came to meet Shivaram. He said, "My boy! You have gained wealth following a bit of wisdom that flowed from me. Don't you feel any obligation towards me?"

"Well, I should give you a share of what I got, I suppose," said Shivaram.

"Instead of giving me a share, show me the spot where you passed the night and received the gold," pleaded the scholar.

"All right," said Shivaram and he led Gopalacharya to the cremation ground and showed him the spot which the scholar wanted to see.

Early in the night Gopala-

charya went to the spot again and lay there closing his eyes. But the atmosphere of the place frightened him. He did not get any sleep till the midnight. At last when he got a little sleep, he felt that someone was pulling him. He shrieked and shivered and sat there till it was dawn, without trying to sleep any more.

In the morning he looked around carefully to see if there was any gold lying by. But he saw nothing.

Back in the village, he told Shivaram, "How is it that I got no gold while you got it twice?"

"How can you get it if it is not in your luck? Even if you find a large lake, the water you can carry home will depend on the size of your tumbler, isn't that so?" said Shivaram.





THE

The Phrase, *The heel of Achilles*, is often used to mean the weak part of a man's personality or the weak point in a strong nation.

Achilles was a great Greek hero who fought in the fierce battle that took place between Troy on one side and Greek states on the other side—famous as the Trojan war.

Though Achilles's father, Peleus, was a mortal, his mother, Thetis, was a nymph. In order to make her son immortal, Thetis anointed him with ambrosia—the drink of gods—during the day, and at night baked him in fire. This ritual had to be practised in strict secrecy. But one day Peleus entered the cabin where the child was being baked and, naturally, he shrieked and shouted in horror and anger. Thus Thetis's bid to secure immor-

talities to her son was foiled.

But she had secured another great quality for her son. She had dipped him in the river Styx thereby making his limbs invulnerable. No blow, no weapon would harm him. But while dipping Achilles in the water, Thetis had held him by one heel which, being above the water, remained vulnerable.

When the Greeks decided to attack Troy, Thetis did not want her son to participate in the adventure. She took him to the island of Seyros and dressing him up as a girl, left him to live with the daughters of the king of the island.

But Odysseus, the great Greek hero, smelled the trick. Disguised as a seller of ornaments he went to the palace and displayed his ware before the princesses. His basket contain-

HEEL OF ACHILLES

ned not only ornaments but also a spear and a shield.

While the princesses as well as Achilles were examining the ornaments, as previously arranged by Odysseus, his friends sounded trumpets, calling soldiers to battle. The girls at

once fled into their apartments, but Achilles instantly picked up the spear and the shield. Odysseus laughed and obliged the young man to shed his disguise.

Long is the story of Achilles's exploits during the Trojan War. When the Trojans had taken him almost as invincible, the god Apollo revealed his weak point to Paris, the Trojan prince. Paris shot his arrow aiming at the heel of Achilles and that killed him.

The phrase *The heel of Achilles* reminds us of the proverb, "A chain is no stronger than its weakest link". If a very strong chain with one weak point is used to pull a weight, it will snap at the weak point. The strength of other parts cannot prevent it from giving away. The same truth applies to a man's character or to the soundness of an organisation.



Mendicant Who Saved A Village

Not far from the city of Delhi, on the river Yamuna, was a small and isolated village surrounded by acres of corn-fields. Although the city throbbed with events and excitements, the village was as quiet as a picture.

One morning the villagers saw an old mendicant whom they had never seen before seated under the banian tree at the centre of the village.

"Wherefrom did you come, O mendicant, and what is the purpose of your sitting here?" asked the villagers.

"I come from the same Mother from which you all come. My purpose of sitting here is to live for some days among the good people here," replied the mendicant with a kindly smile.

The villagers built a small hut for him under the banian tree. As days passed, the mendicant became the friend, philosopher and guide of all. He solved the problems of the villagers with his influence and wisdom and inspired them to live honestly and truthfully.

Once it so happened that an epidemic struck all the fowls of the village dead. The villagers reported of their ill luck to the mendicant. The mendicant said, "It is unfortunate that the fowls died. But if you have faith in God and if you pray to Him, this might prove even a matter of good luck!"

Not that all the villagers believed what the mendicant said. But they kept quiet because they revered him.

The next day the villagers felt disturbed to see that all the dogs had left the village. In those days dogs were indispensable for a village at night due to a large number of burglars frequenting that area.

But when they told the mendicant about it, he only repeated his message, "If you have faith in God and if you pray to Him, even this will prove a blessing in disguise!"

A strange thing happened on the third day, in the evening. In those days there were no matchboxes. People either rubbed two pieces of stones for sparks of fire to emerge or

they kept the fire shimmering in their oven all the time. That day fire went out in all the ovens in all the households of the village and however the people tried, they failed to strike fire out of the stones.

Bewildered, they approached the mendicant and reported the matter to him.

"Did anything like this ever happen beforehand?" asked the mendicant.

"Never," replied the villagers.

"Then here must be some very special cause behind the phenomenon," observed the mendicant, which, however,

could not quite satisfy the villagers.

The mendicant kept a holy fire constantly alight inside his hut. Even that was found extinguished. The villagers started doubting the holiness of the mendicant. If whatever happened to ordinary people also happened to the mendicant, then how was he superior?

Some villagers prepared to proceed to the next village to fetch fire. But the mendicant stopped them with his stern words: "You won't die for lack of fire tonight itself! Why don't you wait till the morning and see? What if you don't



cook your food or even go without food for just a night?"

Early in the morning some villagers were on their way to the suburb of the city to fetch fire. Suddenly they saw something like a sandstorm advancing towards them. They hid behind a broken wall. Soon what had appeared like sandstorm was found to be a large army on horse-back, commanded by a foreign invader. They had lately plundered through the city and had passed through so many neighbouring villages, burning houses and killing people mercilessly.

They stopped near the broken wall. The leader and his son were at the head of the army. The son exclaimed. "There, father, is yet another village. Let us invade it!" He pointed his finger at the isolated village

where the mendicant lived.

"No use, you naive young fellow. That is a deserted village. You don't hear a single note of cock-a-doodle even though it is morning. No dog barks. No smoke is seen coiling over the house-tops. That means not a soul lives there."

The invaders then galloped away in another direction.

The hiding villagers hurried back to their folks and trembling with the terror which had passed though, they narrated what they heard. All realised how true was the mendicant's observations. They rushed towards the mendicant's hut to express their gratitude to him. But the hut was empty. The mendicant had left. Nobody knew his destination.

But he had saved the village from certain destruction.





Visitors From Under The Ground!

Ranganath was such a miser that although he had accumulated a fortune, he lived like a beggar.

His wife who fell sick died for lack of proper treatment. She left a son behind. Because Ranganath hardly spent anything on food, the little boy remained hungry for the most part of the day. He would immediately run to a shop if he by chance got a small coin from any source.

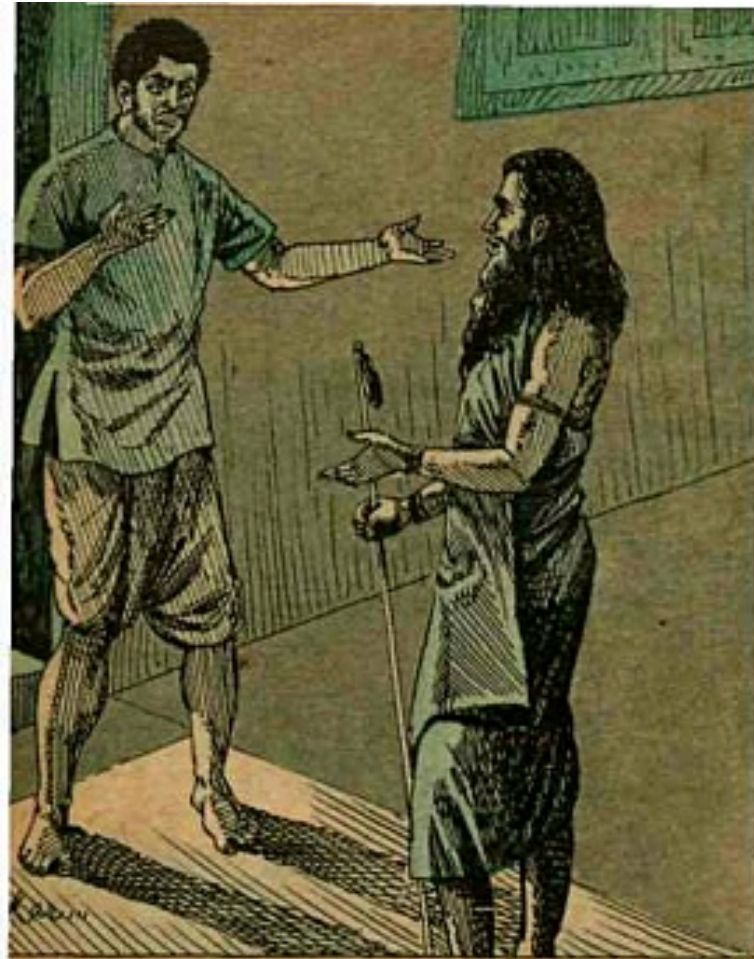
Ranganath was always worried about the safety of his wealth. After much deliberation he dug a pit under a tree behind his house and buried a jar. Only a little opening was visible through which he slipped

whatever coins came to his hand.

His son saw him in that operation several times. He was intrigued. At last one day he made bold to enquire of Ranganath, "Father! We cannot buy enough rice and vegetable to feed ourselves properly. Yet, how is it that you throw money into this hole?"

Explained Ranganath, "My son! Our money-lenders dwell under the ground. We owe them a big sum. Since I cannot pay the amount at a time, I pay in small instalments."

"I see," said the son who completely believed his father. He now got an explanation for his father's miserliness.



But he felt much annoyed with the so called money-lenders who were, as the poor boy believed, responsible for his miserable condition. Another day he asked Ranganath, 'Father! What if we stop paying the money-lenders? Why not we spend the money on food?'

Ranganath was not at all pleased with his son's query. "This boy will spend every bit of the money that would fall in his hand," he thought. Then, in order to scare the boy, he said, "My son, the money-lenders who dwell under the ground are no ordinary men. They are ruthless so far as their business

is concerned. If I stop paying for a day or two, they will appear with lathis and break our heads!"

"My God!" muttered the terrified son.

It was a winter night. A mendicant appeared before Ranganath's door and said, "I am hungry and tired. Will you please give me a meal tonight?"

"How do I care whether you are hungry or well-fed? Get out!" shrieked Ranganath.

"Never mind about the meal. But it is awfully cold outside. Will you kindly grant me shelter for the night?" asked the mendicant pleadingly.

"Get out, I say! Had I ever borrowed your money that you demand such facilities from me?" shouted Ranganath while closing his door on the mendicant's face.

"No, you have not borrowed anything from me. But you must have borrowed from someone else! That is why you cannot enjoy the wealth you have accumulated. It will fall into someone else's hand," said the mendicant.

"Shut up!" shouted Ranganath through his window, "You deserve to suffer. Spend the

winter night in the open. That should be a nice lesson to an insolent fellow like you."

"Who knows, brother, a time might come when you too would be required to spend the night in the open!" replied the mendicant with a sigh.

"Why should I, you quarrelsome fellow? Don't you see that I own a house as good as a mansion?" retorted Ranganath.

The mendicant smiled and went away.

A few days passed. Ranganath was required to go to a distant village on business. He told his son, "You must always keep a vigilant eye over the household during my absence. I will be back in two or three days. Don't cook more than half a palmful of rice everyday and don't pluck more than one brinjal from the kitchen garden."

On the third night, Ranganath's son woke up at the sound of bangs on his door. He thought that his father had come back. But opening the door he saw three strong men armed with lathis who rushed in without any ceremony.

The boy immediately remembered his father's warning that if the money-lenders were not



paid for two or three days they might come with lathis. He had no doubt left in his mind that the visitors were the money-lenders.

He pleaded with the thieves, "O benevolent money-lenders! Pardon our default in payment. As you know, never a day passed without my father slipping a coin into the hole leading to your residence under the ground. But he has been out of station for three days. He will resume making the payment as soon as he would be back."

The thieves were clever enough to guess the situation. Their leader asked, "You say



that your father has been out for only three days. How is it then that we have stopped receiving payment since several days? He must be putting the coins at the wrong place!"

"Well, this is where he puts the coins, of course!" said the boy pointing at the place where the jar was buried.

"As we suspected, he has been throwing money at the wrong place. However, we can take away our due," said the thieves and they dug out the heavy jar and left the place happily carrying it with them.

Ranganath returned the next day. As soon as he looked into

his compound, he understood that the jar had been removed. With a great shock he shouted, "Who took away my jar?"

"There is nothing to worry, father, the jar has not been stolen," said his son.

"You have just removed it to some other place, have you? But why and where have you kept it?" demanded Ranganath.

"Don't be excited. The wealth has gone to those whom it belongs," replied the boy.

"But the wealth belongs to me! What do you mean by saying it has gone to whom it belongs?" asked the bewildered Ranganath.

The son, who was quite proud that he had recognised the money-lenders all right, narrated all that had happened.

Ranganath realised that he was to blame himself for having spoken lies to his son. Still he chided the boy and said, "It was nothing but foolish of you to open the door at midnight!"

The son understood where his blunder lay.

At night Ranganath went out into the village and roamed about alone, faintly hoping that if he would see the thieves he would follow them and find out where they lived. After



a few hours he was tired and afraid of darkness. He returned to his house and tapped on his door. But the son who had grown cleverer did not open the door. As the cold was severe, he banged on the door with all his might and shrieked. But to no avail. At last he slumped on the veranda and passed the night, shivering.

Early in the morning the mendicant happened to pass by that road. "What is the matter? Why are you suffering the terri-

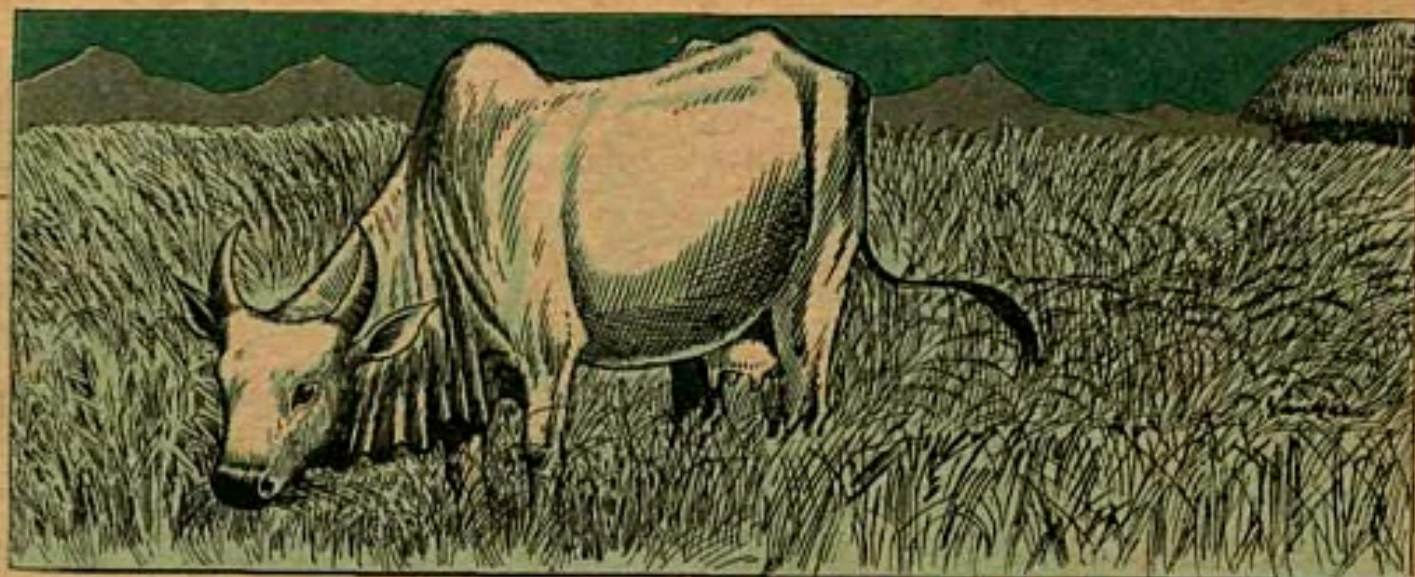
ble cold in the open although you have a house that is as good as a mansion?" he asked with a chuckle.

Ranganath, red with shame, could not utter a word.

But the event left a great impact on Ranganath. No more did he hoard money at the cost of his own comfort as well as his son's. No more did he speak a lie to his son. Moreover, he became sympathetic towards people who were in difficulty.



"They said this was a prison without bars—they didn't tell me there were no windows either!"



A CASE FOR COMPENSATION

Poonam Singh was a poor peasant, with just an acre of land for his property. Unfortunately, he had to transfer that property to Kishanlal, who was a money-lender-cum-shopkeeper, from whom he had borrowed some money.

Poor Poonam was left with only a cow as the sole source of his livelihood. He sold the milk to Kishanlal and with the price he obtained, he bought rice and other necessities from Kishanlal's shop.

Kishanlal was greedy and mischievous. He always devised schemes to benefit at others' expense. For several months he had an eye on Poonam's excellent cow.

One day it rained non-stop in torrents. Poonam could not

take his cow out for grazing. The cow remained shut in the shed for the whole day.

But at night the hungry cow snapped the rope and escaped into the village. She entered a small field on which Kishanlal had grown crops.

In the morning Kishanlal, accompanied by a number of villagers, confronted Poonam. "Your cow has destroyed my valuable crops. You must pay me the compensation," he said and the villagers supported him.

Poonam was very sad. "How much compensation do you expect?" he asked after some hesitation.

"Two hundred Rupees," replied Kishanlal.

"Two hundred rupees! I don't have even two paise with

me!" said Poonam, throwing back his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Then surrender your cow to Kishanlal," suggested a villager who had been privately briefed by Kishanlal.

"You wish me to die, do you? You don't expect me to live with my sole source of income gone!" Poonam shouted desperately.

"That is none of my business," retorted Kishanlal.

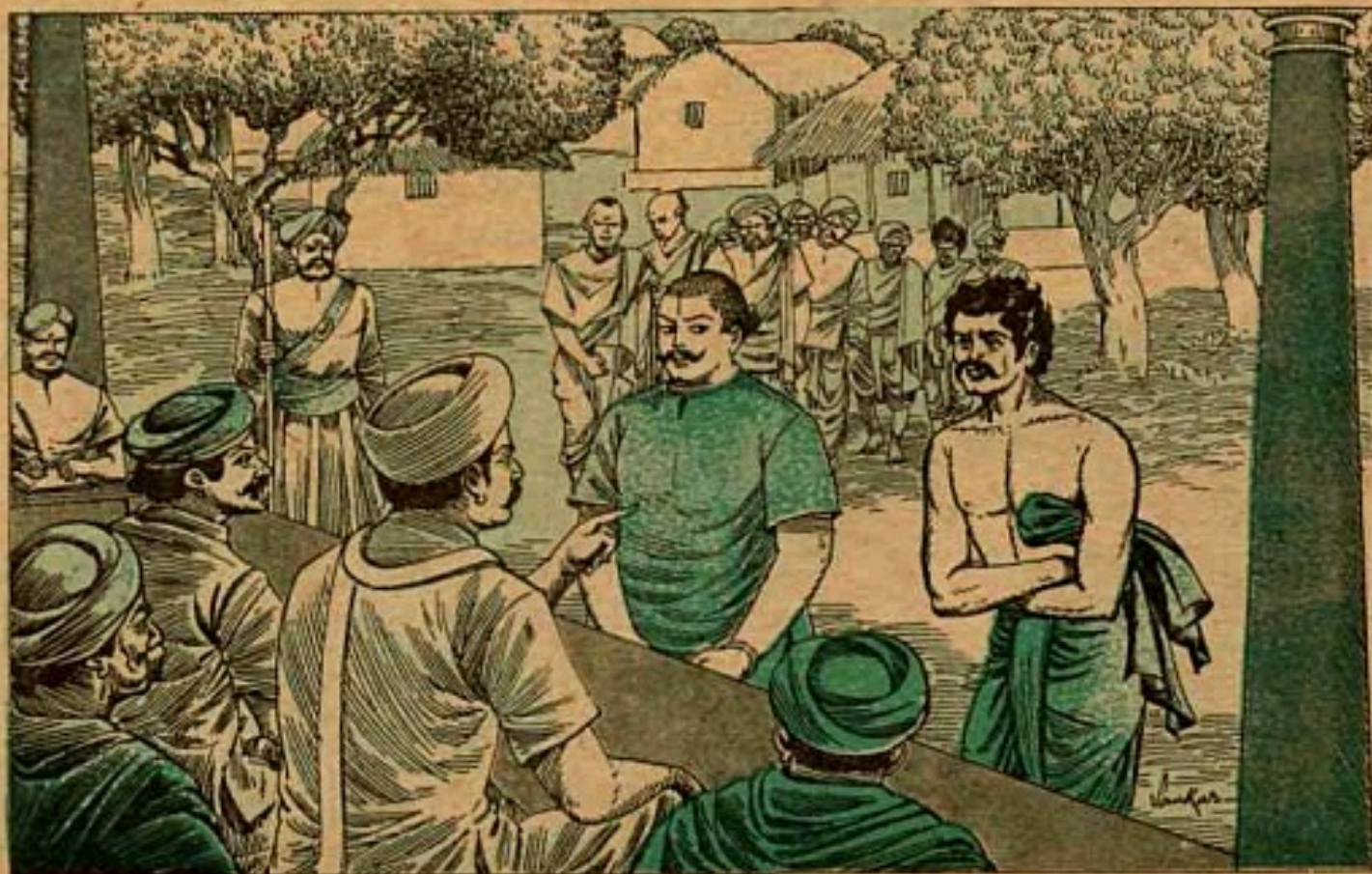
They went to the headman of the village. The headman, on hearing the case, said, "I am sorry for you, Poonam, but in the present circumstance there is

no other way for you than to give compensation to Kishanlal. Of course, two hundred rupees is too much. I will request Kishanlal to reduce it to a hundred rupees."

"No use, headman, sir! I am not in a position to pay even ten rupees what to speak of hundred. Kishanlal knows it very well. All I earn, I earn from him, selling him milk. All I buy, I buy from him," said Poonam.

"If you can't pay even hundred rupees, then, I am afraid, you have to surrender your cow to him," said the headman.

As soon as the headman gave



his decision, Kishanlal's servants took hold of Poonam's cow and led it away.

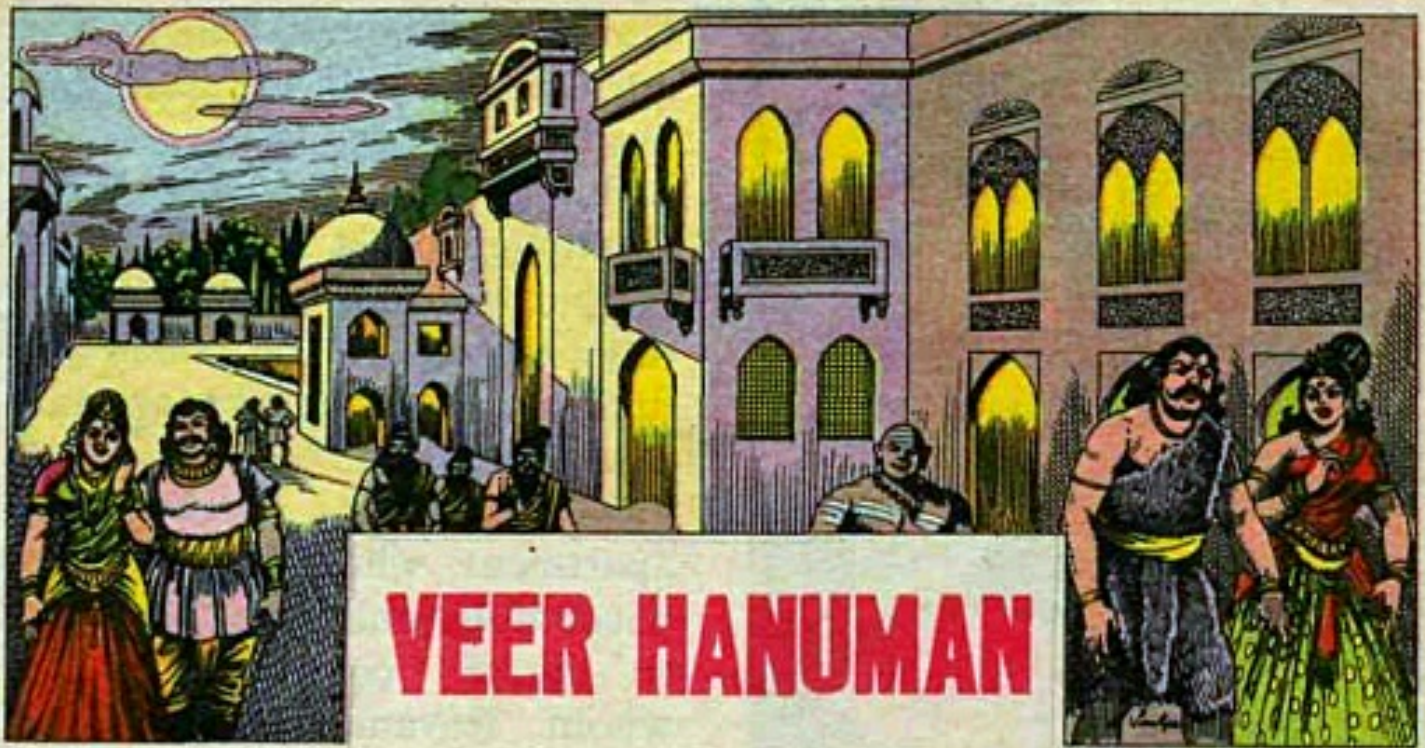
Poonam went without sleep throughout the night. He felt that grave injustice had been done to him. Early in the morning he left for the town, to meet the magistrate, who was well-known for imparting justice.

He narrated his plight to the magistrate, who realised that poor Poonam had been harassed for no fault of his. He summoned Kishanlal and the villagers. When they came and Kishanlal narrated his version of the case, the magistrate said, "After hearing both the sides, I have come to the conclusion that the fault entirely lay with Kishanlal. The rope with which the cow was kept fastened

to the pole inside the shed had been purchased from Kishanlal. It was an inferior string of rope, for which Kishanlal had taken a good price. If the cow could snap the rope, it was because Kishanlal had sold such weak stuff to Poonam. Secondly, Kishanlal had raised no fence around his field, thus leaving the field unprotected. That was his second fault. There is no cause for Poonam to suffer for Kishanlal's faults. Kishanlal must forthwith restore the cow to Poonam and should give him fifty rupees to compensate for the inconvenience and agony caused to him."

Then the magistrate chided the villagers for their unsympathetic attitude towards a poor fellow-villager who was being deprived of his sole source of livelihood.





Inside Lanka Hanuman surveyed with curiosity the activities of the demons. Some were busy performing *yagna*; some were performing certain secret rites to bring about the destruction of their enemies. They wore various sorts of dress; they looked quite different from each other too. Some had mounds of locks on their heads while some were shorn of hair. Some of the demons were quite tall, with ears as big as those of elephants. Some more were rather dwarfish. While most of them had clad themselves in skins of animals, some had adorned themselves with ornaments and colourful pastes.

The night was approaching

its end. A bright moon hung over the city. Hanuman stealthily entered the palace of Ravana. Most of the demon women of the inner apartments were asleep. Some, however, were still engrossed in singing and dancing and a few were chitchatting with their paramours.

Hanuman observed each one of them with attention. But none of them appeared to him to be Sita Devi. He felt worried. He made yet another rapid survey of the city and entered the palace again.

Ravana's palace looked wonderful, comparable only to Indra's abode in heaven. The walls were studded with jewels. Abounding in colourful arches



and gates, the palace was guarded by able-bodied demons who never slackened their vigilance. Parts of the palace were left for elephants and horses which were looked after very well. Demons occupied the other parts. The whole palace breathed an atmosphere of affluence and happiness.

Hanuman entered every apartment and saw its grandeur. The doors and windows were embossed with flowers and leaves of gold. Creepers of gold entwined the pillars. In a corner was kept Ravana's famous flying chariot—the *Pushpaka*. The chariot, which once belonged to the god

Kuvera, was remarkable for the intricate works of art spread all over it.

But all this could not make Hanuman forget for a moment the purpose of his mission. As time passed and he could not find Sita Devi, he felt more and more depressed.

At last he entered the apartment which housed the wives of Ravana. They belonged to three categories: those whom Ravana had married in the natural process; those who had been captured by him; and those who had come of their own to marry Ravana. All the cabins in this apartment were flooded with light from bejewelled lamps. Hanuman could see the women scattered in a chaotic fashion, for, most of them had been drunk. They wore dazzling ornaments and garlands of fragrant flowers, nevertheless.

Soon Hanuman saw where Ravana lay. His body looked like a rock and his extended hands lay like a pair of gigantic snakes with five hoods each. His body was smeared with red sandalwood paste. He too, wore costly ornaments.

On an adjoining bed lay Mandodari, Ravana's wife. She

looked so beautiful that for a moment Hanuman thought that she might be Sita Devi. But on the second thought he realised that he was wrong. How could have Sita Devi gone to comfortable sleep in her captive condition? How could she care to wear ornaments when she had been separated from Rama? No, this lady could not be Sita Devi. Hanuman left the apartment.

One by one Hanuman searched all other apartments of the palace too, including the theatres and the music rooms, but in vain. Suddenly a painful doubt crept into his mind: Had Sita Devi put an end to her life? Or Had Ravana killed her? Couldn't it have happened that she had died of fear and anxiety?

Hanuman was overwhelmed by a feeling of remorse. "How shall I show my face to my comrades if I go back without success? What reply can I give to their question about my earlier claim that I must trace Sita Devi?" Hanuman brooded over such questions.

"Let me not pass the valuable time worrying," he told himself at last and with redoubled vigour went out into the areas



skirting the city. He climbed the hills and entered the caves. He even did not forget to explore the underground chambers. He entered bushes and looked into wells. Wherever he found a deserted house he went into it and examined it carefully. But nowhere was Sita Devi to be found.

In despair he thought since he was unable to find Sita Devi it would be fitting for him to light a pyre in the seashore and to throw himself into it. But he thought again, "If die I must, why shouldn't I die after killing Ravana or capturing him and producing him before Rama?"



started chattering. Flowers from higher branches fell on Hanuman's head. He was amazed to discover that all the trees were not natural; some were made of silver, gold and other precious metals and were made to appear natural! He had no doubt left in his mind that it was a very special garden.

In a short while his eyes fell on a golden castle at the middle of the garden. Situated on a hillock, it was surrounded by high walls. A sweet spring flowed by its side reflecting the dazzling pillars of the castle.

Hanuman went as near the castle as possible and hiding on a thick-leaved tree, spied into the apartments. Suddenly his eyes were attracted at a woman sitting alone, encircled by a number of demonesses scattered at some respectable distance. Though sad and emaciated, she looked so graceful and divine that Hanuman could instantly realise that she whom he saw was none other than Sita Devi.

She wore a soiled cloth and tears continuously rolled down her cheeks. Hanuman had had a distant glimpse of Sita Devi when Ravana was carrying her away in his flying chariot.

As such thoughts were passing through his mind, he suddenly saw a garden which he had not seen earlier. It abounded in *Asoca* trees. He lost no time in bouncing towards the garden.

He made his body light and climbed tree after tree. It was a charming garden with flowers of many a hue. Since it was the season of spring, the entire garden looked most lively. Sweet fragrance filled the atmosphere. Choice creepers and delicate shrubs grew amidst the big trees.

As Hanuman jumped from tree to tree the sleeping birds woke up in their nests and

Hanuman had seen the ornaments which she had thrown down and which were now in Rama's custody. With a close look at Sita Devi Hanuman could see that excepting those very ornaments Sita Devi had other ornaments on her body as described by Rama. He was now doubly sure about Sita Devi's identity.

Hanuman's joy knew no bound. He felt like shouting and jumping down the tree. But he was prudent enough to check himself. He slowly changed to another tree and observed the demonesses carefully.

It was dawn. Voice of

demon-priests reading scriptures could be heard from nearby houses.

As soon as Ravana woke up he remembered Sita Devi. He dressed up well and advanced towards the *Asoca* garden. A train of damsels followed him. Some of them showed him the way by holding forth torches with gold handles. One held an umbrella on his head. Among these women were his bodyguards too.

Hanuman could know about the approaching procession from the tinkling sound that came from the anklets of the demonesses. He raised his head and saw Ravana coming.



Eager to see what he would do, Hanuman descended to a lower branch and sat hiding.

Ravana stopped right in front of Sita Devi.

Sita Devi shivered with fear and hatred at Ravana's approach. She cast a hurried look around herself in order to see if there was anybody nearby who could come to her rescue. But disappointed, she wept.

Fixing his gaze on Sita Devi who looked like sorrow personified, Ravana said, "Sita! What is there to feel so uneasy at my sight? I am enamoured of you. You should accept me and feel brave. You have nothing to fear either from me or from anybody else. Since you do not love me yet, I will not touch you. But I beseech you not to wrong yourself by donning soiled cloth and pass-

ing sleepless nights. Just accept me and see how very beautiful life will prove to you. You can then occupy the finest apartment and bed in the palace, can put on the best of dress and ornaments and can enjoy the most luxurious food and drink. You can pass your time in play and music. I am prepared to make you my chief queen. I will be a slave unto you. All the inmates of the palace will be at your beck and call. Why are you pushing away such wonderful opportunities? It seems you are still thinking of that wonderer, Rama. I can assure you that he was no more. Even if he was alive, it will be impossible for him to find you out. Be sensible, I say, and accept me without any more hesitation!"

CONTD





CHEATING THE CHEAT

In days gone by there was a clever man named Chanda in the employment of a king. He was a conjurer and he knew many magic tricks. But he passed himself as an astrologer and a yogi and often cheated people with his lies. Another officer of the king was his accomplice.

One morning the queen went to bathe in the river, for it was an auspicious day. She put off some of her heavy ornaments and kept them on the river-bank before entering the water. There was nobody there excepting a few trusted maids of the queen. But when the queen began putting on her ornaments she found that one of them was missing. The queen felt perturbed. She could not understand who among her

maids could have stolen the ornament. She loved all of them for they were her childhood friends and had been sent to her husband's house along with herself by her parents.

The sad queen reported all about the theft to the king. The king, who had a great faith in the capacity of Chanda, called him and asked him if he could find out who the thief was. Chanda smiled and said, "My lord! Give me a day's time. I am sure I will be able to tell you what actually happened to the ornament."

In the evening while Chanda was relaxing in his house, one of the queen's maids, Malini, came running to him and falling at his feet, said tearfully, "Sir! Now that the case has been entrusted to you, I have no

doubt that you will find out the turth. Before you find out that I was the thief, I thought it wise to confess my crime to you. It is my cursed greed that tempted me to steal the ornament. Here it is. Please pardon me. Do not give out my name to the king or the queen!"

Malini handed over the ornament to Chanda. "Do not be afraid," said Chanda, "I will save you. But don't tell anybody that you had met me. That might put you in danger."

After Malini left, Chanda wrote with onion juice on a piece of paper, "The ornament has fallen into the river." In the morning he went to the court and held the paper against the smoke rising from a lamp. The words were then visible to all. He gave the impression that it was a spirit who wrote

in that way. The same afternoon Chanda and his accomplice went to a jeweller and tried to sell the ornament to him. While the bargaining was going on, Malini arrived on the spot, accompanied by two guards of the king. Chanda and his accomplice were arrested and the ornament was recovered.

Malini then told the king in the court, "My lord, I knew for long that Chanda was a cheat. He threatened or blackmailed several people. But who would have believed me if I would have just said so? That is why I hid the queen's ornament and now you know what sort of yogi and astrologer your Chanda is!"

Malini was duly rewarded. Chanda and his accomplice were made to leave the kingdom.



FUN WITH SCIENCE

Here's a trick to astound your friends. For you can blow up a balloon without putting it your lips—or pumping air into it! All you need is the balloon and an empty bottle. Put the neck of the balloon over the top of the bottle, and then grip the bottle with both hands. In a short time, the balloon will begin to expand. This is because the air inside the bottle expands as it is warmed by your hands. Eventually, the air expands so much that it forces its way into the balloon, thus blowing it up. By putting the bottle under a tap, you can make the balloon go down again.



SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES

(SORRY, NO CLUE ANYWHERE IN THE MAGAZINE)



THE POWER OF TALES

Krishna Sharma was a learned man, well-versed in epics and scriptures. A crowd surrounded him every evening to listen to his words. But hardly did Krishna Sharma quote philosophy or showed his learning to the crowd. He kept his audience charmed by narrating tales and anecdotes.

Krishna Sharma had a worthy son named Ved Prakash. He was a renowned scholar and was employed in the king's court as one of his advisers. Ved knew well how learned his father was. He was intrigued to see Krishna Sharma whiling away his time as well as the time of the audience narrating mere stories instead of giving discourses on scholarly topics.

"Father, why don't you tell something valuable to the people? Why are you so very fond of telling tales?" Ved one day asked his father.

"I have realised that for educating the people there is nothing like the tales. Tales give the people knowledge while amusing them. An appropriate

tale can inspire an idler to action, can show light to a fool and can bring joy to a sad heart," replied Krishna Sharma. His reply, however, could not satisfy Ved altogether.

Once Ved Prakash was required to pay a visit to a distant kingdom as the king's emissary. Krishna Sharma, thinking that it might not be proper for his son to travel alone, accompanied him.

They reached the kingdom, known as Mayur, safe. The king of Mayur received them with due warmth and arranged a feast in their honour. The king knew that Ved Prakash and his father were vegetarians and they did not drink wine. Accordingly, they were entertained to vegetarian dishes and fruit juices while other invitees were provided with food and drink according to their habit.

The court-jester of the king of Mayur who always looked forward to an opportunity for raising a laugh, stood before Ved and recited a list of choice wines and asked, "Sir, which

one of these drinks you like most?"

"Well, I have never tasted any of them!" replied Ved innocently.

Barring the king and a few dignified ministers all the rest laughed at Ved's reply. But Krishna Sharma hurried to say, "The laughter reminds me the story of the swan and the herons."

"Will you please tell us that story?" said the jester.

"Why not, it is a short piece," said Krishna Sharma and went on, "It so happened that once a beautiful swan of the Manasarovara, the heavenly lake situated in the remote region of the Himalayas, forgot its way and descended on a pond which was the home of a large number of herons.

"The herons who had never had such a visitor were very much curious to know all about the swans of Manasarovara. 'What do you eat?' they asked the swan. 'The root and fruit of lotus,' replied the swan. 'What! You have never tasted crabs and fish nor have ever known the flavour of rotten fish!' exclaimed the herons. 'No, I have never known them,' confessed the swan. At that the



herons had a hearty laugh. Well here ends the story!" said Krishna Sharma.

This time the king as well as his ministers laughed. The jester looked pale.

Ved and his father were next invited to dine with the jester. They accepted the invitation and went to the jester's house the next night. The jester had invited several important men of the court to join Ved and his father in the dinner. All the guests including Ved and Krishna Sharma were given beef. When Krishna Sharma objected to that, the jester apologised and explained that they



had been given the item by mistake. But he added, "Sir, I too was a vegetarian before coming to this country. But since great men have said that it was wise to follow the natives when you come to a new country, I took to the habit of meat-eating soon after my arrival here. Why don't you do the same?"

All the guests looked at Krishna Sharma with curiosity to hear what he would say.

"Well, whether one should change one's habit or not depends on the quality of the person. Once a lion got locked up, accidentally, in a

cowshed. There were no cows in the shed then, but there was plenty of straw which the cows ate. The lion struggled for days but could not come out of the shed. He was hungry to the point of death, yet he did not touch the straw!"

The guests laughed and the jester looked pale again.

Ved now realised the efficacy of tales. On their way back home, Ved told his father, "Indeed, no length of lecture can do what a small tale told at the right time can do. Now I understand why you prefer telling stories to giving learned discourses. But, father, I have

a personal problem. Can you tell me a tale which contains a solution to it?"

"What is your problem?" asked Krishna Sharma.

"I have a few assistants in the office I hold. When I first joined the office as their boss, they were all quite afraid of me. But as is my nature, I behaved towards them most affably as though they were my friends. The result is, they just do not care for me, talk audaciously before me and have started disobeying me. What is to be done?"

Krishna Sharma smiled and said, "Long ago a snake had faced the same type of problem. At the advice of a sage it had given up biting people and it lay under a tree as innocent as a string or rope. That encouraged the people to hurl

stones at it and even to kick at it. The poor snake suffered a lot. Luckily, the sage happened to pass by the tree after a year. The snake narrated its plight to him. Said the sage, 'You naive creature, it is true that I had advised you to give up biting people. But had I ever told you to give up hissing at them?' The snake caught the point! Thereafter it raised its hood and hissed furiously whenever anyone approached it. People were scared. They left the snake alone."

"I understand the moral, father! I should have all goodwill and love for my assistants in my heart. But so far as outward conduct is concerned I should be a strict administrator and behave with dignity as my position demands."





Reward and Punishment

A bandit named Lakkiram became notorious in Shyampur when King Mahendra ruled over the kingdom. The king announced a handsome reward for whoever could help catch the bandit. As time passed, he went on increasing the value of the reward. But in vain. Lakkiram continued to remain at large.

When the king's police were at the height of their efforts at catching the bandit, a mendicant paid a visit to the royal court. The king who always showed special regards to sages and mendicants, received the mendicant with due honour. While talking to the mendicant, the king told him of his own anxiety on account of the bandit.

"I know Lakkiram," said

the mendicant, "and I can tell you that the chap is already tired of living continuously underground, in fear of being captured. I believe, if you make an announcement to the effect that Lakkiram would be made an officer in your service if he voluntarily reports to you, he will surrender!"

The mendicant's idea appealed to the king. He sent his heralds in all directions of the kingdom to make the announcement as suggested by the mendicant.

Next day the mendicant stood before the king and said, "O noble king! Pardon my sins. I am Lakkiram myself. I surrender to you. Now, be pleased to perform your part of the promise."

Lakkiram then shed his disguise, to the king's great amazement.

The king appointed Lakkiram as an officer in his court and gave him a nice house to live in.

"My lord! A bandit who has harassed and even killed people, should not be honoured in this way," the minister told the king confidentially.

"Just wait and see," replied the king.

A few weeks passed. One day the king handed over a letter to Lakkiram and asked him to carry the same to the king of the neighbouring State, Jaysingh.

Lakkiram chose a fine horse from the royal stable and galloped towards King Jaysingh's court.

He had to pass through a forest. At one place an old man, who was faltering along the forest road alone, signed him to halt. Lakkiram stopped his horse and asked, "What do you want?"

"It will be most kind of you if you give me a lift up to the end of the forest. I will sit behind you carefully," replied the old man.

"But where are you going and why?" demanded Lakkiram.

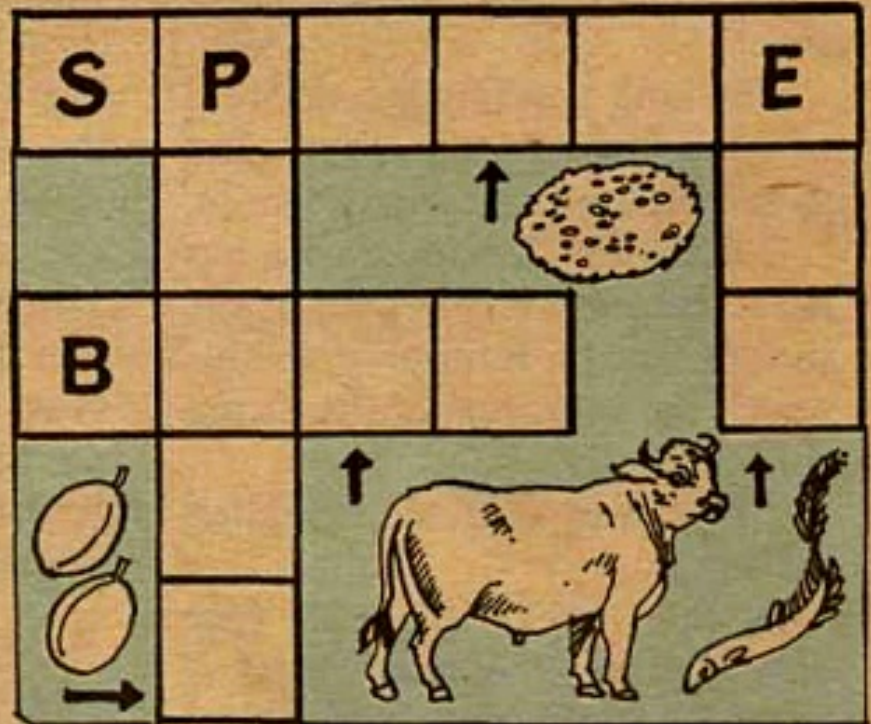
The old man looked around and satisfied that there was no third person to hear him, said lowering his tone, "You know, the town beyond the forest has some very good goldsmiths. I am going to buy some ornaments for my grand-daughter. She is to be shortly married. Now you can understand why I am afraid of walking alone, for, I carry a good amount of money!"

"Is that so?" said Lakkiram gleefully as he brought out his sword and then shouted at the old man, "Hand over your money at once and clear away or you die!"

But something most unexpected happened the very next moment. Some soldiers who were hiding inside the bushes sprang up at once and captured Lakkiram and led him back to the court. The king threw him into the jail, saying, "You had stopped stealing, true. But I wanted to find out whether you had given up the desire to steal or not. Since it is now proved that you still possessed the character of a bandit and you were about to plunder a man, you deserve punishment."

PUZZLE TIME

This is your word puzzle.
Just fill in the names of
the pictures where the
arrows point to complete it.



2. Find out the jumbled up animals and name them.



ANSWERS	1	ELL
2	SPONGE	BULL
OSTRICH	PLUMS	GIRAFEE
DEER		LION



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To Chor Bazaar our heroes go
Many a bargain they see on show.



An antique lamp catches
their eye. So unique that
they soon do buy



They rub the lamp
and give a shout, Lots
of smoke comes swirling out



"Hey Ram wow, can you
see, It looks like
Alladin's genii"



"What's your wish,
oh my master
I'll grant it
quick if not faster"



"For gold or silver
we have no greed, A crate
of Poppins will fill our need"



Lo and behold, a crate so tall
A merry time
was had by all!



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